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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

9 March 1959

DAILY BRIEF

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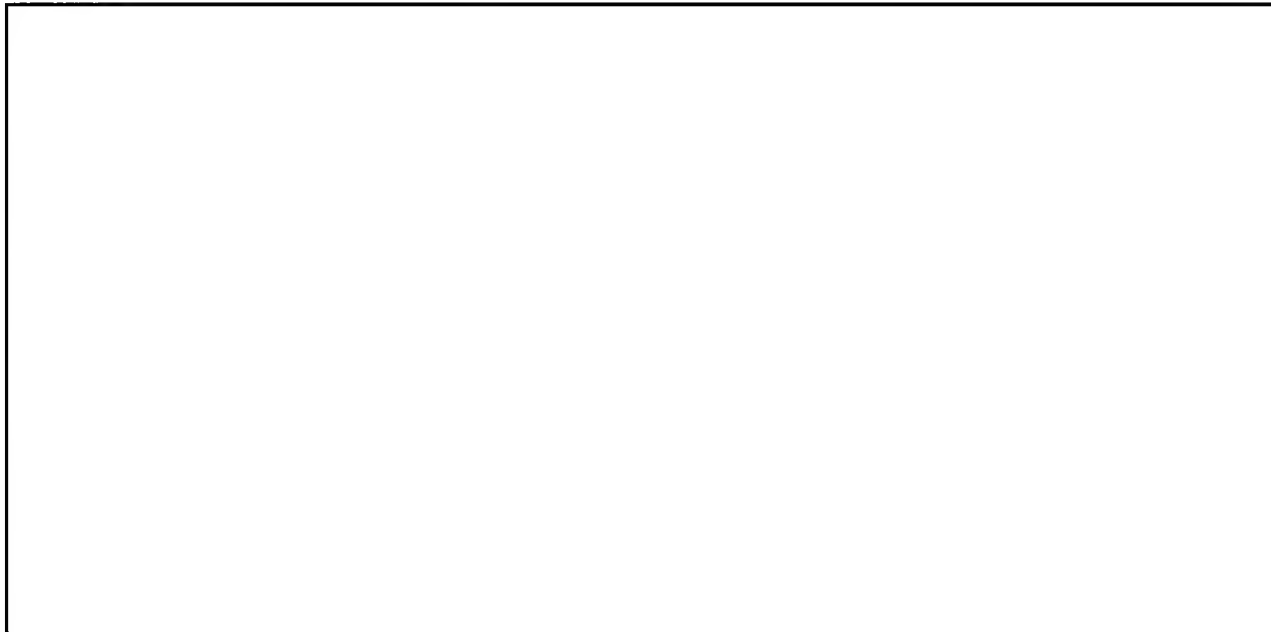
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State Dept. review completed

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III. THE WEST

France-NATO: [Paris' note of 6 March to NATO states that the French Mediterranean fleet will be under exclusively national control in wartime, but will cooperate with Allied naval units provided there is no conflict with its "principal mission" of defending France's North African interests. Both the note itself and Foreign Minister Couve de Murville's comments to US Chargé Lyon attribute this move to France's concern over the Algerian situation, and the note pointedly refers to "the absence of any real solidarity" in NATO on Algeria. The French rejection of an agreed obligation is likely to arouse strong feelings among other NATO members.]

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III. THE WEST

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France Withdraws Its Mediterranean Fleet from NATO

[France's 6 March note to NATO states that it is resuming national control "in time of war" over its naval forces in the Mediterranean. The fleet has been under French control in peace-time, but "earmarked" for NATO command in war. The 6 March note states the fleet will "cooperate" with Allied units in war "if this does not conflict with the fleet's principal mission," defined as the defense of the French and North African shores and the communications between.]

[The note explains that the fleet's mission in either war or peace must "on a priority basis" be an exclusively national mission, "especially in the absence of any real solidarity" on the problems of Algeria and North Africa generally. Foreign Minister Couve de Murville underlined this aspect of the note by telling US Chargé Lyon that the move was motivated entirely by the Algerian situation.]

[The French have repeatedly expressed the view that their allies did not fully appreciate the contribution France was making to the alliance by its effort in Algeria, which they conceive as defending NATO from being outflanked to the south and hence as vital to the whole Western world. To obtain NATO backing of French policies in Africa and the retention of French military and naval bases there, De Gaulle has reportedly considered proposing that NATO expand its area of responsibility to include the Sahara.]

[This French move climaxes other recent French obstructionist tactics in NATO aimed at safeguarding national prerogatives. Paris' opposition to the projects for an atomic stockpile and integrated air defense have drawn sharp Allied criticism. The French rejection of an agreed obligation is likely to arouse strong feelings among other NATO members.]

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